HIS VERSION OF IT

Paul Leicester Ford

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of It

Felicia

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By

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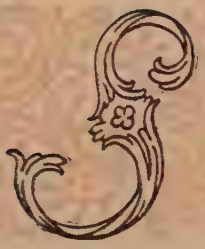

HE's a darling!" exclaimed the bay mare, between munches of the big red apple.

"That's just what she is!" responded the off carriage-horse; and then, as part of his apple fell to the floor, he added fretfully: "I do wish, Lassie, that you girls wouldn't talk to a fellow when he's doing something! You've made me lose half my apple!"

Old Reveille, with the

prudence of twenty-eight years of experience, carefully deposited the unmasticated fraction of his apple beside an uneaten one in his manger before remarking reflectively: "She's a thoroughbred; but she's not the beauty her mother was at the same age."

"Fie!" reproved one of the cobs: "how can you be so ungallant, when she always gives you an extra apple or piece of sugar?"

"I call it shameful unfair-

ness," growled the nigh horse of the pair. "She doesn't keep you up till two or three in the morning at balls and cotillions. She doesn't so much as ride you in the park, as she does Lassie or Bubbles. When you haven't done a step of work in six years, and spend your summers out in the pasture and your winters in a box-stall eating your head off, why should you get a double portion?"

"Yes." whinnied Bubbles,

plaintively; "and, what's more, she always kisses you."

Reveille, who meantime had swallowed his first apple, looked up with a lofty smile of superiority. Then he slowly winked his off eye, remarked, "Naturally, you don't understand it," and fell to lipping his second apple caressingly, previous to the decisive crunch. "See if that doesn't drive the women wild," he cogitated, with a grin.

"Now isn't that just like a

man!" complained Lassie. "As if it wasn't enough to get more than his share, but he must go and have a secret along with it."

"Huh!" grunted the polo pony, who was, of necessity, the brains-carrier of the stable; "if it's family property, it can't be much of a secret; for I never heard of anything to which six humans were privy that didn't at once become town gossip. And they must be aware of it, for, from the Major to the

Minor, they discriminate in favour of Reveille in a manner most reprehensible." The polo pony was famous for the choiceness of his language and the neatness of his wit; but he was slightly vain, as was shown by his adding: "Pretty good, that, eh? Major—that's the man we take out riding or driving. Minor—that's the three-year-old. Do you hitch up to that post?"

"Do they all know your

secret, Reveille?" asked Lassie, ingratiatingly.

"They think they do," replied the veteran. "They don't, though," he added; and then, heaving a sigh, he continued: "But the roan filly did, and Mr. Lewis's big grey, and dear old Sagitta—that was the Russian wolf-hound, who died before any of you youngsters joined our set."

"Then I fail to perceive," remarked the polo pony, "why they should treat you differ-

ently, if they are ignorant of the circumstances to which you refer."

"My dear colt," retorted Reveille, "when you are grown to horsehood you will learn that we are all governed by our imaginations, and not by our knowledge. Why do you shy at a scrap of white paper? Superficially because you are nearly related to an ass, actually because your fancy makes it into a white elephant."

"And how about your putting your head and tail up, and careering all over the home lot, last summer, just because our Major fired his revolver at a hawk? Were you an ass, too?" saucily questioned one of the cobs.

"Probably," assented the oldster, genially; "for that very incident proves my point. What that shot reminded me of was the last time I heard my Major fire his revolver. I saw a long, gentle slope, up

which a brigade of 'secesh' were charging to a railroad embankment protected by a battery of twelve-pounders firing six rounds of case-shot to the minute. And I was right among the guns again, seeing and hearing it all; and my Major—only he was a captain then—was saying as coolly and quietly as he orders the carriage now: 'Steady, men, steady! There 's a hundred yards yet, and they can't stand it to the finish. Double charge

with canister! Three more rounds will settle them.' Which was just what it did. We horses, with the aid of the men and guns, held the Weldon railroad, and Lee and his mules stopped holding Richmond."

"Doesn't he tell a story beautifully?" remarked Bubbles, in a distinctly audible aside to Lassie.

"I've never known a better raconteur," answered Lassie, in a stage whisper of equal volume.

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"Lay you a peck of oats to a quart that the girls get that secret out of him," whispered the Major's saddle-horse, who, as a Kentuckian of thoroughbred stock, had sporting and race-track proclivities.

"Not with me!" denied the second cob. "Besides, no gentleman ever bets on a certainty. Gaze at the self-satisfied look on the old fool's phiz. Lord! how a pretty face and figure, combined with flattery,

can come it round the old ones!"

There could be no doubt about it. Reveille was smirking, though trying not to desperately; and to aid his attempt, he went on, with a pretence of unconscious musing, as if he were still in the past: "Yes; we are ruled by our imaginations, and, consequently, though I have reached the honourable but usually neglected period in life which retires an officer

and a horse from active service, I get a box-stall and extra rations and perquisites."

"How rarely is the story-telling faculty united with the philosophical mind!" soliloquised Bubbles to the rafters.

"And how rarely," rejoined Lassie, "are those two qualities combined with a finished, yet graphic, style!"

"I would gladly tell you that story," said the old war-horse, "but it isn't one to be repeated. Every horse who

isn't a cow—to make an Irish bull, which, by the bye, is a very donkeyish form of joke—has done certain things that he has keenly regretted, even though he believes that he acted for the good—just as brave soldiers will act as spies, honourable lawyers defend a scoundrel, and good women give 'at homes.'"

"What a decadence there has been in true wit!" remarked Lassie, apropos of nothing. "It is such a pleas-

ure to be put next a horse at dinner whose idea of humour was formed before youthful pertness was allowed to masquerade as wit."

"It is a mortification to me to this day," went on Reveille, "even though the outcome has justified me. You know what our equine code of honour is—how we won't lie or trick or steal or kill, as the humans do. Well, for nearly two months I was as false and tricky as a man."

"I don't believe it," dissented Bubbles.

"The truly great always depreciate themselves," asserted one of the mares.

"No, ladies, I speak the truth," reiterated the warrior; "even now the memory galls me worse than a spur."

"It would ease your conscience, I am sure," suggested Bubbles, "to confess the wrong, if wrong there was. A highly sensitive and chivalric nature so often takes a

morbidly extreme view of what is at most but a peccadillo."

"This, alas! was no peccadillo," sighed Reveille, "as you will acknowledge after hearing it."

"I may be a colt, but I'm not a dolt," sneered the polo pony to himself. "As if we weren't all aware that the garrulous old fool has been itching to inflict his long tail upon us for the last ten minutes."

"My one consolation," con-

tinued Reveille, "is that the roan filly was in the traces with me and an equal culprit in—"

"I thought that one of the sex of Adam would saddle it on a woman before he got through," interjected the cob.

"*Cherchez la femme!*" laughed the polo pony, delighted to trot out his French.

"All I meant to suggest, ladies and gentlemen," affirmed Reveille, reflectively, "is that a woman is an ex-

cuse for anything. If this world is a fine world, it is because she pulls the reins more often for good than for bad."

"'Those who always praise woman know her but little; those who always blame her know her not at all,'" quoted the worldly-wise Kentuckian.

Reveille swallowed the last fragment of his second apple, cleared his throat and began:—

"It was after Five Forks, where my Captain got a ma-

jor's oak-leaf added to his shoulder-straps, and a Minié ball in his arm, that the thing began. When he came out of the hospital—long before he should have, for the bone had been shattered, and took its own time to knit—we hung about Washington, swearing at our bad luck, my Major suffering worse than a docked horse in fly-time from the little splinters of bone that kept working out, and I eating my head off in —"

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"History does repeat itself," murmured the envious carriage-horse.

"Well, one day, after nearly three months of idleness, when I was about dead with stalldom, I permitted the orderly to saddle me, and after a little dispute with him as to my preferences, I let him take me round to Scott Square. There for the first time I met the roan filly and the big grey. She was a dear!" he added, with a sigh, and paused a moment.

"Ah, don't stop there!" begged one of the ladies.

"Get a gait on you," exhorted the cob.

Reveille sighed again softly, shook his head, and then came back to the present.

"'May you never lack for oats and grass,' said I, greeting them in my most affable style.

"'May you die in clover,' responded the grey, nodding politely.

"'May you have all the

sugar you desire,' added the filly, sweetly, and greeting me with a graceful toss of the head. That told me that a woman belonged to her, for men never give sugar. Sometimes, on a forced march, my Major used to divide his ration of hardtack with me; but I never tasted sugar until—well, we mustn't get ahead too fast."

"No danger, while he is doing the lipping," grumbled the disagreeable cob.

"'I see by your saddle that you are in the service,' remarked the big grey. 'I am not so fortunate. Between ourselves, I think the fellow I let ride me would do anything sooner than fight — though, now it's all over, he says if he'd returned from Europe in time he should have gone into the army.'

"I shook my head dejectedly. 'I'm very much off my feed,' I told them. 'My Major is not able to ride, and won't

be for a long time, so I'm horribly afraid I've been sold. I really wouldn't have believed it of him!'

"'What things man is capable of doing!' sighed the filly, with tears of sympathy in her eyes.

"'Cheer up, comrade,' cried the grey, consolingly. 'Even if you are sold, you might be worse off. You are still a saddle-horse, and as Miss Gaiety and I both have good stables, you probably will have the

same luck, since you are in our set. The fellow I carry spurred my predecessor, when he was leg weary, at an impossible jump in Leicestershire, and because he fell short and spoiled his knees the brute ordered him sold, and he was put to dragging a huckster's cart, besides being half starved. You 're not so bad off as that yet.'

"Just then three people came out of the house before which we were standing, and

I can't tell you how my heart jumped with joy, and how my ears went forward, when I saw that one of them was my Major. For the instant I was so happy that I felt like kicking up; but the next moment I was ready to die with mortification at the thought of how I had cheapened him to strangers. Think of my saying such things to them of the best man that ever lived!

"'That's *my Major,*' I told them, arching my neck and

"'That's *my Major*,' I told them"

flicking my tail with pride. 'He held the Weldon railroad without — '"

"But you told us a little while ago," protested Lassie, "that — "

"Yes, yes," hastily broke in the story-teller with a note of deprecation in his voice. "Don't you see, girls, that having just belittled him, I had to give him the credit of it, though really we horses — But there, I won't go into that now."

"That much is saved!" muttered the cob.

"Walpole," said the polo pony, "well described a certain period of life when he denied that a man was in his dotage, but suggested that he was in his 'anecdotage.'"

"It was far from my intention—" Reveille began, with dignity.

"I do wish you would bridle your tongues, the two of you," snapped Bubbles. "It's just what I should expect of a colt

that has never seen anything better than a poplar ball and a wooden mallet, and so dislikes to hear of real battles. Please pay no heed to him, Mr. Reveille."

"We don't notice either of them one curb or snaffle bit," declared Lassie, "so why should you? Forgive me for interrupting you, and do tell us what you told the steeds about our Major?"

Reveille hesitated, and then resumed his tale: "'His bat-

tery held the Weldon railroad without any infantry supports,' I told them, adding, 'Sheridan's right-hand man. Perfect devil at fighting, and the kindest human in the world.'

"The roan filly, being a woman, answered: 'He looks both;' but the grey, being something more stupid, remarked: 'Then what made you think he had sold you?'

"'Dear Mr. Solitaire,' cried the mare, 'you must know

that we all say things in society, not because we think them, but to make conversation. I knew Mr.—thank you, Mr. Reveille—was joking the moment he spoke.' I tell you, gentlemen, women can put the blinders on facts when they really try!

"'What do you think of my Felicia?' asked Miss Gaiety.

"I had been so taken up with my dear that I had n't so much as looked at hers. But, oh, fellows, she was a beauty!

Filly built, right through — just made to be shown off by a habit; hair as smooth as a mare's coat, and as long and thick as an undocked tail; eyes — oh, well, halter it! there is no use trying to describe her eyes, or her nose, or her mouth, or her smile. She was just the dearest, loveliest darling that I ever did see!

"Mr. Lewis was putting her up, while my poor dear stood watching them, with a look

in his face I had never seen. Now, when there was anything to be done, my Major was always the man who did it, and it puzzled me why he had let Mr. Lewis get the better of him. The next instant I saw that his right arm was still in a sling, and that his sword-sash was used to tie it to his body. Then I knew why he had an up-and-down line in his forehead, and why he bit his mustache.

"'Can I give you any help,

Major Moran?' asked Mr. Lewis, when he had helped Miss Fairley mount.

"'Thanks, no,' answered my pal, rather curtly, I thought; and putting his left hand on me, into the saddle he vaulted. But he was foolish to do it, as he said 'Ouch!' below his breath; and he must have turned pale, for Miss Fairley cried out, 'Mr. Lewis, quick! He 's going to faint!'

"'Nothing of the kind,' denied my backer, giving a good

imitation laugh, even while his hand gripped my neck and I felt him swerve in the saddle. 'Miss Fairley, I will not let even you keep me an interesting invalid. If there was any fighting left, I should long since have been ordered to the front by the surgeons; but now they wink their eyes at shirking.'

"'I told you you ought not to go, and now I 'm sure of it,' urged Miss Fairley. 'You 'll never be able to control such

a superb and spirited horse with only your left arm.' "

"Bet that 's a subsequent piece of embroidery," whispered the polo pony to his nearest neighbor.

"Now, I have to confess that I had come out of the stable feeling full of friskiness, and I had n't by any means worked it off on the orderly, much of a dance as I'd given him. But the way I put a check-strap on my spirits and dropped my tail and ears and head

was a circumstance, I tell you.

"'There is not the slightest cause for alarm,' my confrère answered her. 'The old scamp has an inclination to lose his head in battle, but he's steady enough as a roadster.'

"'I really wish, though, that you would n't insist on coming,' persisted Miss Fairley, anxiously. 'You know—'

"'Of course, Miss Fairley,' interrupted my Major, with a nasty little laugh, 'if you pre-

fer to have your ride a solitude *à deux*, and I am in —'

"'Shall we start?' interrupted Miss Fairley, her cheeks very red, and her eyes blazing. She didn't wait for an answer, but touched up the filly into a trot, and for the first mile or two not a word would she say to my colleague; and even when he finally got her to answer him, she showed that she was n't going to forget that speech.

"Well, what began like this

went from bad to worse. He wasn't even aware that he had been shockingly rude, and never so much as apologised for his speech. When Miss Fairley did n't ask him to ride with them the next day, he ordered me saddled, and joined them on the road; and this he did again and again, though she was dreadfully cool to him. My dear seemed unable to behave. He couldn't be himself. He was rude to Mr. Lewis, sulky to Miss Fairley, and kept

a dreadful rein on me. That week was the only time in my life when he rode me steadily on the curb. My grief! how my jaw did ache!"

"I wish it would now," interrupted the cob, sulkily. Let it be said here that horses are remarkably sweet-natured, but this particular one was developing a splint, and was inevitably cross.

"Don't be a nag," requested one of the mares.

"The roan filly always blamed

my Major for making such a mess of the whole thing ; but even though I recognised how foolish he was to kick over the traces, I saw there were reasons enough to excuse him. In the first place, he enlisted when he was only nineteen, and having served straight through, he had had almost no experience of women. Then for six months he had been suffering terribly with his arm, with the result that what was left of his nerves were all on

edge. He began to ride before he ought, and though I did my best to be easy, I suppose that every moment in the saddle must have caused him intense pain. Finally, he had entered himself for the running only after Mr. Lewis had turned the first mile-post and had secured the inside track. I really think, if ever a man was justified in fretting on the bit my chum was.

"At the end of the week Miss Gaiety bade me good-

bye. 'I heard Mr. Fairley say that we could now go back to Yantic; that 's where we live, you know,' she told me. 'It's been a long job getting our claim for uniforms and blankets allowed, but the controller signed a warrant yesterday. I'm really sorry that we are to be separated. If your associate had behaved decently, you might have been asked to visit us.'

"'Yes,' announced the big grey; 'Miss Fairley has asked

the bully who rides me and myself to spend a few days with you next week. I suppose they 'll settle it then.'

"But the officer and horse who commanded the battery which held the Weldon railroad were n't going to be beaten as easily as that, you may be sure! When I took my rider back to the stable that afternoon, I heard him say to the orderly: 'Jackson, I 'm going North next week, and shall want Reveille to start

before me. I 'm in too much pain to give you your orders now, but come round to-morrow morning and get your instructions.'

"Yantic was nothing but a little village clustered about a great woollen-mill, without any stable or hotel to live in, so we had to put up at Norwich, a place seven miles away; and it was a case of put up, I tell you, in both food and attendance! For a decently brought-up horse to come

down to a hotel livery-stable is a trial I never want to go through again. In the field I never minded what came, but I do hate musty corn and damp bedding.

"You girls would have laughed to see the roan filly's face the first time we met on the road.

"'Horse alive!' she cried, without so much as a greeting, 'you don't mean to say you have hopes? Why, Mr. Solitaire and that horrid Mr.

Lewis arrive to-day, and the thing 's probably as good as decided.'

"'My Major is very resolute,' said I.

"'So is a mule,' snapped Miss Gaiety, 'but we don't think the more of him for that.'"

The polo pony gave a horse laugh as he said, "*That* was one on you."

"It was," acknowledged Reveille; "and I regret to say it made me lose my temper to

such an extent that I retorted, 'I can't say much for the taste of *your* woman!'

"'No,' assented the filly; 'if what you and Mr. Solitaire say is true, she's taking the worse of the two. But then, a human can't help it. If you covered a horse all over with clothes, do you think any one would know much about him? Moreover, two-thirds of what men do or say is said or done only to fool a woman. How can a girl help making mis-

takes, when she's got nothing to go by but talk? Why, look at it. Your Major seems balky most of the time, won't talk half of it, and when he does, says the things he should n't; while Mr. Lewis is always affable, talks well, and pays indirect compliments better than any man I ever met.'

"'If she could only be told!' I groaned.

"'She would be, if I could talk,' sighed the mare. 'I'd let

her know how he treats his horses!'

"'Miss Gaiety,' I ejaculated, 'I've got an idea.'

"'What?' she demanded.

"'Wait a bit till I've had time to think it out,' said I. 'Gettysburg wasn't fought in five minutes.'

"'Gettysburg was a big thing,' she answered.

"'So 's my idea,' I told her.

"In the meantime my Major was explaining to Miss Fairley that the government had sent

him to New London to inspect the ordnance at Forts Trumbull and Griswold, and that he found it pleasanter to stay in Norwich, and run down by train to New London for his work. That's the way humans lie when it doesn't deceive any one and it is n't expected that it will. Of course Miss Fairley knew what brought him North, and why he preferred Norwich to New London! One thing he did do, though, which was pretty good. He apologised to

her for having said what he did before their first ride, told her that his wound had been troubling him so that at times he scarcely knew what he was saying, and declared he'd been sorry ever since. He was humble! The Eleventh Battery of Light Artillery would never have known him.

"'There,' sniffed Miss Gaiety; 'if the idiot had only talked in that vein ten days ago, he might have done something. Oh, you men, you men!'

"At least he won a small favour; for when he asked leave at parting, to be her companion the next day in a ride, she told him he might join her and Mr. Lewis, if he wished. But the permission was n't given with the best of grace, and she didn't ask him to luncheon before the start.

"I thought out my idea over night, and put it in shape to tell. My Major took me to the Fairleys' a little early, and so went in, leaving me alone. In

a minute, however, a groom brought the filly and the grey round to the door, and with them came Sagitta, the Russian wolf-hound, whom, it seems, Mr. Lewis had brought from Europe, and had just presented to Miss Fairley.

"After the barest greetings, I unfolded my scheme. 'I don't know,' said I, 'what Mr. Sagitta thinks, but we three are a spike-team in agreeing that Mr. Lewis is a brute.'

"'I bow-wow to that,' as-

sented the dog. 'He kicked me twice, coming up yesterday, because I was afraid to go up the steps of the baggage-car.'

"'So far as we can see he is going to win Miss Fairley,' I continued. 'As Miss Gaiety says she 's a dear, I think we ought to prevent it.'

"'Very pretty,' says the grey; 'but, may I ask, who is to interfere and put the hobbles on him?'

"'We are to tell her he's cruel.'

"'She won't understand us, if we tell her till doomsday. These humans are so stupid!' growled Sagitta.

"'That's where my idea comes in,' I bragged—a little airily, it is to be feared. 'We can't, of course, tell it to her in words, but we can act it.'

"'Eh?' exclaimed the filly, with a sudden look of intelligence.

"'Not possible,' snorted the big grey.

"'I see,' cried the mare, her

woman's wits grasping the whole thing in a flash, and in her delight she kicked up her hind legs in the most graceful manner.

"'Heyday!' exclaimed the grey, using our favourite expletive.

"It didn't take me long to explain to him and Sagitta, and they entered into the scheme eagerly. We were so hot to begin on it that we pawed the road all into holes in our impatience.

"Presently out came the three, and then the fun began. Mr. Lewis stepped forward to mount Felicia, and at once Miss Gaiety backed away, snorting. Then the groom left us, and tried to hold her; but not a bit of it; every time Mr. Lewis tried to approach she 'd get wild.

"Finally my Major joined in by walking over to help, and the mare at once put her head round and rubbed it against him, and stood as quiet as a

mouse. So he says: 'I've only my left arm, Miss Fairley, but I think we can manage it;' and the next moment she was in the saddle.

"Lewis was pretty angry-looking as he went toward his own horse; and when he, too, began to back and snort and shiver, he didn't look any better, you may be sure of that. You ought to have seen it! The brute caught him by the bridle, and then the grey kept backing away or

dodging from him. Out on the lawn they went, cutting it up badly, then into Miss Fairley's pet bed of roses, then smashing into the shrubberies. I never saw better acting. Any one would have sworn the horse was half dead with fright.

"It didn't take very much of this to make Lewis lose all self control.

"'You cursed mule!' he raved, his face white with passion; 'if I had a decent

"'Stop!' she called hotly"

whip, I'd cut the heart out of you!' And suiting the action to the thought he struck the grey between the eyes with his crop a succession of violent blows, until, in his fury, he broke the stick. Then he clenched his fist and struck Solitaire on the nose, and would have done so a second time if Miss Fairley had n't spoken.

"'Stop!' she called hotly, and Lewis dropped his fist like a flash. Felicia was breathing

very fast and her cheeks were white, while her hands trembled almost as much as Solitaire had. Her face wore a queer look as she continued: 'I—excuse me, Mr. Lewis, but I could n't bear to see you strike him. He—I don't think he—something has frightened him. Please give him just a moment.' Then she turned to my dear, saying, 'Perhaps you can calm him, Major Moran?'

"I should think he could! Talk of lambs! Well, that

was Solitaire when my Major went up to him. He let himself be led out of the flower-bed back to the road as quiet as a kitten. The moment Lewis tried to come near him, however, back away he would, even from my confrère. The groom tried to help; but it takes more than three humans to control a horse who does n't want to be controlled.

"After repeated attempts they got tired of trying; and then Mr. Lewis suggested,

with a laugh that didn't sound nice: 'Well, Major, we mustn't cheat Miss Fairley of her afternoon; and since you seem able to manage my beast, perhaps you 'll ride him and let me take yours ? '

" Usually I should have been very much pained at my comrade's nodding his head, but this time it was exactly what I wanted. Whoop ! Ride me? Neigh, neigh ! If you ever saw a coward in an ague of a blue funk, that is what I was. I

blessed my stars none of the Eleventh Battery were round! Lewis tried; but, do his best, I would n't let him back me. When my Major interfered, I sidled up to my dear just as if I couldn't keep away from him; but when he attempted to hold me for Lewis to mount, I went round in a circle, always keeping him between me and the brute. It was oats to me, you 'd better believe, to see the puzzled, worried look on Miss Fairley's

face as she watched the whole thing.

"Well, they discussed what they called 'the mystery,' and finally agreed that they couldn't ride that afternoon, so we horses were sent down to the stable, and the three went back to the verandah. Sagitta told me afterward what happened there.

"'Come here, pup,' calls Lewis to him, the moment they were seated.

"Sagitta backed away two

steps, bristling up, and growling a bit.

"'Come here, you brute!' ordered Lewis hotly, rising.

"Sagitta crouched a little, drew his lips away from his fangs, and pitched his growl 'way down in his throat.

"'Look out! That dog means mischief,' cried my Major.

"'Are the animals possessed?' roared Lewis, his voice as angry as Sagitta's snarl, yet stepping backwards,

for it looked as if the dog were about to spring.

"But my Major did n't retreat—not he! He sprang between the wolf-hound and Miss Fairley. 'Down, sir!' he ordered sharply; and Sagitta dropped his lips and his bristles, and came right up to him, wagging his tail and trying to lick his hand.

"'Is n't it extraordinary?' cried Miss Fairley, with a crease in her forehead. 'Here, Sagitta!'

"Miss Fairley, be careful!' pleaded my Major; but there wasn't the slightest necessity. Sagitta was by her side like a flash, and was telling her how he loved her, in every way that dog could. And there he stayed till Lewis came forward, when he backed away again, snarling.

"Now, in all their Washington intercourse my Major had been the surly one; but in the interval he had evidently had time to realise his mistake, and

to see that he must correct it. Probably, too, he was n't depressed by what had just taken place. Anyway, that afternoon he was as pleasant and jolly as he knew how to be. But Mr. Lewis! Well, I acknowledge he'd had enough to make any man mad, and that was what he was. Cross, sulky, blurting out disagreeable things in a disagreeable voice, with a disagreeable face: he did make an exhibition of himself, so Sagitta said.

"After as long a stay as was proper, my Major told them he must go, and I was brought round. Miss Fairley came to the stoop with him, and didn't I prick up my ears when I heard her say :

"'Since you were defrauded of your ride to-day, Major Moran, perhaps you will lunch here to-morrow, and afterward we will see if we can't be more successful ?'

"The next day our interference was done a little differ-

ently. When we were brought round to the door, there was Mr. Lewis with a pair of cruelly big rowelled spurs on his boots, a brutal Mexican quirt in his hand, and a look on his face to match the two. Of course the grey gave him a lot of trouble in mounting, but we had already planned a different policy; and so, after enough snorting and trembling to make Felicia look thoughtful, he finally was allowed to get on Mr. Solitaire's back.

"Much good it did him! The filly and I paired off just as if we were having a bridle trip in double harness; but do his best, Mr. Lewis could not keep the grey abreast of us. Twenty feet in front, or thirty feet behind, that was where he was during the whole ride, and Lewis fought one long battle trying to make it otherwise. He had had the reins buckled to the lower bar of the curb, so it must have been pretty bad for the grey,

but there was no flinching about him.

"Every now and then I could hear the blows of the quirt behind me; and when, occasionally, the grey passed us, I could see his sides gored and bleeding where they had been torn by the spurs, and bloody foam was all round his jaw, and flecked his chest and flanks. But he knew what he meant to do, and he did it without any heed to his own suffering. There was joy when

the filly told us that every time the swish of the quirt was heard she could feel her rider shiver a little; and Felicia must have been distressed at the look of the horse, for she cut the ride short by suggesting a return home.

"Sagitta informed us afterward that if Mr. Lewis had been bad the day before he was the devil that afternoon on the verandah, and Miss Fairley treated him like one. What is more, she vetoed a

ride for the next day by saying that she thought it was getting too cold to be pleasant. When we had ridden away, Solitaire later told me, she excused herself to Mr. Lewis, and went to the stable and fed the grey with sugar, patting him, and telling the groom to put something on the spurgashes.

"We horses didn't hear anything more for three days, at the end of which time my pal and I rode over one morning,

and reminded Miss Fairley that she had promised to show us where we should find some fringed gentians; and though it was the coldest day of the autumn, Felicia didn't object, but ordered Miss Gaiety saddled, and away we went.

"We really had a very good time getting those gentians! Nothing was ever done with the flowers, however, owing to circumstances which constitute the most painful part of my confession. For a horse

and an officer, I had been pretty tricky already, but that was nothing to the fraud I tried to perpetrate that morning. After our riders had mounted for the return to Yantic, I suggested to Miss Gaiety what I thought would be a winning race for my Major, which was neither more nor less than that she should run away, and let him save Miss Fairley. The roan came right into the scheme, and we arranged just how it was to be managed.

She was to bolt, and I was to catch her; but since my Major had only his left arm, as soon as she felt his hand on the rein she was to quiet down; and I have no doubt but it would have been a pre-eminently successful coup if it had been run to the finish.

"What actually happened was that the mare bolted at a rabbit which very opportunely came across the road, and away she went like a shell from a mortar. I did n't even

wait for orders, but sprang after her at a pace that would have settled it before many minutes. Just as I had got my gait, however, my poor dear gave a groan, reeled in his saddle, and before I could check myself he pitched from my back to the ground. I could not stop my momentum under thirty feet, but I was back at his side in a moment, sniffing at him, and turning him over with my nose, for his wounded arm was twisted

under him, and his face was as white as paper. That was the worst moment of my life, for I thought I'd killed him. I put my head up in the air, and did n't I whinny and neigh!

"The filly, finding that something wrong had happened, concluded to postpone the runaway, and came back to where I was standing. Miss Fairley was off her like a flash, and, kneeling beside my treasure, tried to do what she could for him, though that really

wasn't anything. Just then, by good luck, along came a farmer in an ox-cart. They lifted my poor dear into it, and a pretty gloomy procession took up its walk for Yantic.

"When we arrived at the Fairleys' house, there was a to-do, as you may imagine. He was carried upstairs, while I went for the doctor, taking a groom with me, because humans are so stupid that they only understand each other. I taught that groom a thing or

two about what a horse can do in the way of speed that I don't believe he has ever forgotten."

"Did you do better than 1.35½?" inquired the Kentuckian; but Reveille paid no heed to the question.

"After that sprint I had about the dullest month of my life, standing doing nothing in the Fairleys' stable, while nearly dying of anxiety and regret. The only thing of the slightest interest in all that time oc-

curred the day after our attempted runaway, when Mr. Lewis came down to the stable, and gave orders about having the big grey sent after him. He was n't a bit in a sweet temper — that I could see; and though I overheard one of the grooms say that he was to come back later, as soon as the nurse and doctors were out of the house, the big grey thought otherwise, and predicted that we should never see each other again. Our

parting was truly touching, and put tears in the filly's eyes.

"'Friends,' said Solitaire, 'I don't think he will ever forgive me, and I suppose I am in for a lot of brutality from him; but I am not sorry. If you ever give me another thought please say to yourself: "He did his best to save a woman from having her life made one long nightmare by a cruel master."'

"Nothing much happened in the weeks my Major was

housed, with the exception of one development that had for me an extremely informing and delightful quality. One day, about a month after our cropper, Felicia came down to the stable, and without so much as a look or a word for Miss Gaiety, came straight into my stall, flung her arms about my neck, and laid her soft cheek caressingly against it, for some moments. Then she kissed me on the nose very tenderly, and offered me

what I thought were some little white stones. I had never tasted sugar before, and nothing but her repeated tempting and urging persuaded me to keep the lumps in my mouth long enough to get the taste on my tongue. (I have to confess that since then I have developed a strong liking for all forms of sweetmeats.) What is more, she came down every day after that, and sometimes twice a day, to caress and feed me. There was no doubt

about it, that for some reason she had become extraordinarily fond of me!

"It is awfully hard in this world to know what will turn out the best thing. As a matter of fact, the tumble off my back was about the luckiest accident that ever befell my Major; for it broke open the old wound, and as the local doctors did not have six hundred other injured men under them, they could give it proper attention, which the hospital

surgeons had never been able to do. One of them extracted all the pieces of bone, set the arm, and then put it in a plaster jacket, which ought to have healed it in good shape very quickly. But for some reason it did n't. In fact, I became very much alarmed over the length of my Major's convalescence, till one day I overheard one of the stablemen say :

" ' Lor' ! He won't get well no too fast, with Miss Felicia to fluff his pillers, an' run his

erran's, an' play to him, an' read aloud to him, an' him got nothin' to do but just lay back easy an' look at her.'

"Then I realised that it would be some time before he would feel strong enough to go back to his ordnance inspecting.

"Finally, one afternoon, the filly and I were saddled and brought round to the front door, and there were Miss Fairley and my Major, both looking as well and happy as their best friend would want

"'He won't get well no too fast'"

to see them. It was a nice day, and away we went over the New England hills.

"There was n't much surliness or coolness on that ride, and what they did n't talk about is hardly worth mentioning. After they had fairly cantered, conversationally, for over three hours, however, they slowed down, and finally only Felicia tried to talk, and she did it so jerkily and confusedly, with such a deal of stumbling and stammering,

that presently, try her best, she had to come to a halt, too. Then there was a most awkward silence, until suddenly my Major burst out, more as if the sentence were shot from a gun than as if he were speaking it :

"'Oh, Felicia, if you could only—'

"That seemed to me too indefinite a wish to answer easily, and apparently Miss Fairley thought the same, for another silence ensued which

was embarrassing even to me. So far as I could make out, my Major could not speak, and Miss Fairley would not. I was as anxious as he was to know what she would say, and in my suspense I suddenly conceived an idea that was little short of inspiration, though I say it who ought not. I asked the roan filly :

" ' Is your Felicia resting her weight on the side toward my Major, or on the side away from him ? '

"'She has a very bad seat in her saddle,' the mare told me, 'and she is resting all her weight on the side next you.'

"'Then, Miss Gaiety,' I suggested, 'I think they will like it if we snuggle.'

"'Well, just for this once I will,' replied the filly, shyly."

Reveille turned in his stall, and, walking over to his manger, picked up a wisp of hay. But the action was greeted by an outburst from the ladies.

"'I think they will like it if we snuggle'"

"Oh, you are not going to stop there, dear Mr. Reveille!" they chorused.

"I always did hate a quitter on the home stretch," chimed in the discontented cob, pleased to have a grievance.

The narrator shook his head.

"No, gentlemen," he asserted, "who overheard what followed would ever tell of it; and a horse has an even higher standard of honour."

"Ah, darling Mr. Reveille," pleaded the feminine part of

his audience, "just a little more!"

"I hate to seem mulish," responded the horse, "and so I will add one small incident that is too good not to be repeated. When we rode up to the house that evening, shamefully late for dinner, my Major lifted Miss Fairley off Miss Gaiety in a way that suggested that she might be very breakable, and, after something I don't choose to tell you about, he said:

"'I wonder if we shall ever have another such ride!'

"'It does n't seem possible, Stanley,' whispered my Felicia, very softly. 'You know, even the horses seemed to understand!'"

Just as Reveille finished thus, a human voice was heard, saying:

"You will have the veterinary see the cob at once, and let me know if it is a case which requires more than blistering."

Then came a second and very treble voice. "Papa," it begged, "will oo lif' me up on ol' Weveille's back?" And the next moment a child of three was sitting astride the old warrior and clinging to his mane.

"Well, you old scoundrel," said the human, "do you know you are getting outrageously fat?"

"Weveille is n't not any scoundwel," denied the child, earnestly. "Mama says Weveille is a' ol' darlin'."

"Your mama, fortunately for Reveille and me, always had a soft spot for idiots," explained the man, stroking the horse's nose affectionately. "But I will say this for the old fellow: if most folly resulted as well as his, there would be a big premium on fools."

Reveille winked his off eye at the other steeds.

"Aren't these humans comical?" he laughed.